

IV. B. 11. National Parks

- a) Background. The National Park System of the United States is run by the National Park Service, a bureau of the Department of the Interior. Yellowstone, which was opened in 1872, was the first national park in the world. The system includes not only the most extraordinary and spectacular scenic exhibits in the United States, but also a large number of sites distinguished either for their historic importance, prehistoric importance, scientific interest, or for superior recreational assets. The National Park System is made up of 376 areas covering more than 83 million acres in every state except Delaware. It also includes areas in the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.



Mesa Verde National Park

Proposed Rural Development actions in or near such areas merit special evaluation because of the sensitivity of the resources within them and their national prominence.

- b) Governing Regulations.
- (1) National Park System General Authorities Act of 1970 (84 Stat. 825), as amended.
 - (2) National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (92 Stat. 3518, 16 U.S.C. 1a-5).
 - (3) U.S. Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality.
 - (4) National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S.C. 4321.



- (5) Title 7, Part 1b and 1c, Code of Federal Regulations, U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Environmental Policy Act.
- c) Policy. Rural Development should not authorize, fund, or carry out any proposal or project which would adversely affect the unique values and benefits of designated or nominated National Parks. Whenever a proposed action is determined to have the potential for impacting a National Park, the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, should be consulted as early in the environmental impact analysis process as possible to evaluate the possible consequences and protection requirements concerning the action.
- d) Classification.
- (1) Designated.
- e) Agency Jurisdiction. Following is the expert agency contact at the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Intermountain Regional Office:

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Intermountain Region
P.O. 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

Contact: Hal Grovert, Superintendent, Colorado Plateau and Rocky Mountain Clusters, (303) 969-2800

http://www.nps.gov/pub_aff/imfa.htm

- f) Location of Resource. National Parks represent particularly distinctive representations of national importance and are typically rather large in size. Three National Parks are presently designated within the State of Colorado:

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park: .12 miles northeast of Montrose. Shadowed depths of this sheer-walled canyon accentuate the darkness of ancient rocks of obscure origin. Proclaimed 1999. The Black Canyon of the Gunnison's unique and spectacular landscape was formed slowly by the action of water and rock scouring down through hard Proterozoic crystalline rock. No other canyon in North America combines the narrow opening, sheer walls, and startling depths offered by the Black Canyon of the Gunnison. The National Park contains approximately 30,385 acres as of this writing.



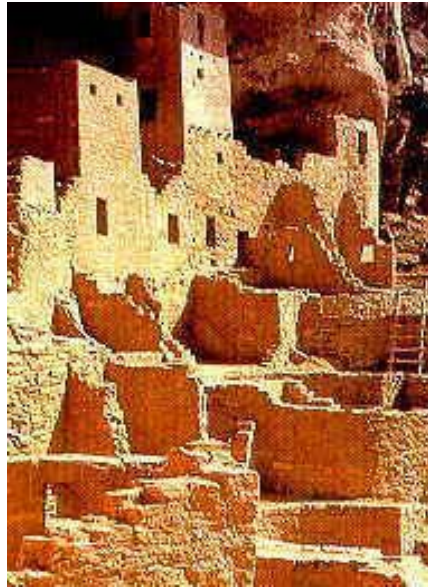
Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

Great Sand Dunes National Monument: 30 miles northeast of Alamosa. Among the largest and highest in the United States, these dunes were deposited over thousands of years by southwesterly winds blowing through the passes of the lofty Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Approximately 39,000 acres as of this writing.



Great Sand Dunes National Park

Mesa Verde National Park: 5 miles southeast of Cortez. Pre-Columbian cliff dwellings and other works of early man are the most notable and best preserved in the United States. Established June 29, 1906. The National Park contains approximately 52,000 acres of which about 8,000 acres are a Wilderness Area as of this writing.



Mesa Verde National Park

Rocky Mountain National Park: 4 miles west of Estes Park. The park's rich scenery, typifying the massive grandeur of the Rocky Mountains, is accessible by Trail Ridge Road, which crosses the Continental Divide. Peaks towering over 14,000 feet shadow wildlife and wildflowers. The National Park contains approximately 265,723 acres of the Colorado Front Range as of this writing.



Rocky Mountain National Park



g) Other References.

(1) National Park Service

(Web-site for Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park)

<http://www.nps.gov/blca/>

(2) National Park Service

(Web-site for Great Sand Dunes National Park)

<http://www.nps.gov/grsa/>

(3) National Park Service

(Web-site for Mesa Verde National Park)

<http://www.nps.gov/meve/>

(4) National Park Service

(Web-site for Rocky Mountain National Park)

<http://www.nps.gov/romo/>